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SUBJECT An Interview with Bina Kiyonaga

BILL KURTIS: We have a rare opportunity to spy into the family life of a secret agent. Bina Kiyonaga has just published a magazine memoir about her late husband's career with the CIA. While Joe worked as a spy, she and her children had their own roles to play in espionage.

Bina Kiyonaga is in our Washington Bureau this morning to tell us about those days and about her husband's.

Good morning, Bina.

BINA KIYONAGA: Good morning.

KURTIS: Good to have you with us.

Why would -- I know you're speaking from the perspective of a wife. Why would a man go into the CIA?

KIYONAGA: Well, Joe joined the CIA right at the inception of the CIA in the late '40s. And I think he viewed it, as most of his colleagues did, as a continuation of their military service in World War II. They viewed it as being in defense of their country. They were motivated by patriotism.

KURTIS: And probably hoping to see a little excitement along the way.

KIYONAGA: You bet.

KURTIS: You write in your article "I also learned to be a spy before dinner parties." I'll let you finish that.

-2-

KIYONAGA: Well, yes. Joe would have a list of the guests if it were an embassy function or whatever. And he would ask me to please zero in on various wives. He'd like to get to know the husbands. I mean it's not unlike corporate wives, diplomatic wives, whatever. And certainly I would try my very best to become friendly with that particular wife, and that, in turn, would lead to friendship of the husbands, possible alliances.

KURTIS: Did you uncover any secrets?

KIYONAGA: No.

KURTIS: Did all wives do this? Were they expected to do that?

KIYONAGA: I have no idea. I have not checked with other wives.

KURTIS: You say there were two types of bad wives. What kind?

KIYONAGA: Ones who talked too much.

KURTIS: Too talkative, and....?

KIYONAGA: And the ones who -- well, let's talk about the talkers....

KURTIS: All right. Well, what would be talking too much? Give us an example.

KIYONAGA: Well, I remember one time I was hosting a lunch with some of our wives, and Joe was chief of station then in the country. And I had several of the subordinate wives in for lunch. And over lunch I was shocked to hear one of them casually drop word of a bugging operation that was going on. I'd never heard of this operation. And I changed the subject. And I didn't pick up the phone and call Joe. It was far too sensitive a subject. But that night I spoke to him about it. He left the house immediately, furious. He cancelled the operation.

KURTIS: What kind of reaction have you had to this article?

KIYONAGA: I've had very favorable reaction. I got some bad press in the New York Post, quoting Director Casey as furious with me.

KURTIS: I read that.

-3-

KIYONAGA: But I have no indication of that. I don't know the gentleman. I've not heard from him or any one from the agency.

KURTIS: You don't consider yourself one of those talkative wives.

KIYONAGA: No. You see, my Washingtonian piece was history. That was not the point of the enterprise. I don't -- I don't expose anyone in place, any agent in place. I don't discuss ongoing operations. Actually, I know of none.

KURTIS: But it's a good insight. Bina, it makes good reading too.

Thank you for being with us this morning.

KIYONAGA: My pleasure.

KURTIS: Bina Kiyonaga.